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TYPES OF ORGANIZATION OF HIGH-SCHOOL ENGLISH

REPORT OF A COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

The National Council of Teachers of English adopted at the outset an aggressive policy. It was apparent that there was work in this field which needed to be done. Accordingly a number of committees were appointed, each to attack a specific problem. Among these was a Committee on the High-School Course in English, the chief purpose of which was to collect a body of information concerning the actual practice of schools in all parts of the country. This task has been performed, and a summary of the facts obtained appears below. It is to be regretted that space will not permit of a fuller account. However, the committee is now acting jointly with a committee of the National Education Association in the preparation of a national syllabus, to be issued by the Commissioner of Education, and hence the results of its labors will eventually be available to all. The preliminary report of this Joint Committee on the High-School Course in English has been published and may be had by applying to the chairman at 68th Street and Stewart Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Thanks are hereby extended to all who have aided the committee. The chairman, upon whom has fallen the chief burden of compilation, takes this opportunity to express his gratitude to the other members, every one of whom took an active and most intelligent interest in the enterprise. Special thanks are due to Mr. Certain, Mr. Reed, Professor Gaw, and Mr. Lewis, who prepared careful digests of the replies from their respective territories.

The committee used a circular letter and question sheet, which, with the omission of a tabular form on which to indicate the textbooks used, the allotment of time to the various subjects, and the factors which had determined the course, is reproduced below.

To Principals of Secondary Schools:

There is no doubt that the course in English in American high schools and academies is undergoing somewhat rapid transformation. The development and differentiation of our high schools tend inevitably to experiment and change in order to adapt the work of the schools to new social and economic

conditions. Recognizing these facts, the National Council of Teachers of English has appointed a committee to gather data and present a report upon the various types of organization of high-school English courses which are now to be found in the United States.

The value of the work of this committee will be greatly increased by the fact that whatever material is secured will be placed at the disposal of the Committee on High-School English of the Secondary Department of the National Education Association, which has already compiled and published a valuable report upon the views of high-school teachers and principals concerning the Uniform Entrance Requirements in English, and which is now under instructions to prepare an English syllabus, to issue from the office of the national Commissioner of Education. In the work of syllabus-making, these two national committees will act jointly, and they will have the co-operation of the Executive Committee of the National Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English and also of the standing Committees on Oral English of the National Speech Arts Association and of the Conference on Public Speaking of the New England and of the North Atlantic states. In this way knowledge of the best theory and practice of the entire country will be placed at the disposal of everyone.

The principal aid that is needed by the committee can be very easily given. *Let each principal who reads this letter kindly see to it that a copy of his high-school course in English, together with any other printed or typewritten matter of like nature available, is sent to the nearest member or to the chairman.* For the guidance of those who are able and willing to do more, a set of questions is added. It is earnestly hoped that all distinctive and typical plans of organization and administration of high-school English now operative or in contemplation will be reported, and that definite and complete information will be given as to the social and other conditions into which the course fits or is intended to fit. To all who lend a hand the committee will be deeply grateful.

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Committee

CHICAGO

September 24, 1912

QUESTIONS

Please answer or request one of your teachers to do so

1. How many pupils recite English daily?.....Length of periods?.....
2. Number of teachers full time?..... Number part time?.....
- What else do the latter teach?
3. How do you test the efficiency of your English course?
4. What is the chief obstacle to complete success?
5. Do composition, grammar, literature, and oral expression constitute a single course?..... With no division of credits?..... If not, please explain your plan.
6. In what way and to what extent is the work in composition (including rhetoric) correlated with the study of literature and the history of literature?
7. What proportion of the assignments in composition is based upon the pupil's knowledge and experience apart from his reading?
8. How are oral composition and the writing of themes related?
9. What provision is made for oral reading, public speaking, training in pronunciation, etc.?
10. Is student criticism of written work employed?..... How?
11. Do teachers keep conference hours?..... Have you a "laboratory" plan?..... What is it?
12. If you have a school paper please send sample copies. How is it conducted? Do you provide any other similar opportunities for practical experience?
13. What work in English grammar do you require?
14. How are the grammar studies related to the pupils' compositions?
15. What work in spelling, punctuation, and other mechanics of writing do you require?
16. What is your basis of (a) choice and (b) arrangement of classics?
17. What use do you make of the Uniform (or other) College-Entrance Requirements?
18. What study of the history of literature (a) American, (b) English do you require?
19. How do you teach mythology?
20. How do you direct the reading of modern and current literature (books and periodicals)?
21. How and for what purposes do you employ dramatization and the art of acting? Literary clubs? The school library?
22. How do you secure satisfactory co-operation on the part of teachers of other subjects?
23. In what way is your course determined by your local conditions?
24. Please add other suggestions which would aid the committee.

Replies were sent by 307 schools, distributed as follows: New England, 32; Middle states, 68; North Central states, 101; the West,

35; the South, 30; Philippine Islands, 1. In many cases the answer sheet was accompanied by a printed or typewritten course of study and sometimes also by a home-reading list, a school paper, or other exhibit. It is noteworthy that, while a few complained of the task, almost all who responded took the trouble to answer with tolerable fulness each of the twenty-four questions asked. This was no doubt due to the personal appeals made by the various members of the committee, each of whom covered a certain specified territory.

SUMMARY OF THE ANSWERS RECEIVED

The time devoted to English in the high school averages about four periods a week throughout each of the four years. In the North Central states, the West, and the South the allotment is generally five periods in each year, the exceptions being for the most part in academic or other private institutions, but in the New England and the Middle states, particularly New York, so liberal a schedule is comparatively rare. There seems to be no agreement in these states as to the proper distribution of time for English. The tendency is toward four or five periods in the first year and three or four in the years which follow. In some cases the allotment is reduced to two periods in the eleventh and twelfth grades. The averages for the five sections appear as follows: New England, 3.89; Middle States, 4.15; North Central states, 5+; the West, 5+; the South, 5+.

It is difficult to discover how the emphasis is distributed among the various aspects of English study. About two-thirds of the schools regard the course as constituting a single, undivided whole and assign but one credit for a term's work. Hence, while they always state that attention is given to masterpieces and to composition, generally also to grammar and to oral expression, and less frequently to the history of literature, they are unable to measure definitely the time devoted to each. It is certain, however, that the study of literary masterpieces outweighs all the others. This is probably due to the fact that the teachers are overburdened, that many of them can arouse more interest in reading than in writing, and that they consider the educational value of literature greater than that of composition and grammar.

The literary selections which are read in the high schools are chosen, with few exceptions, from the lists prepared by the National Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English. The influence of the Conference is most marked in New England and the Middle states, where, in the fourth year, the study of Burke's *Conciliation*, Macaulay's

Life of Johnson or Carlyle's *Essay on Burns*, Milton's minor poems, and Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is well nigh universal and almost exclusive. The exceptional schools are certain private finishing schools. New York presents the greatest degree of uniformity. Here the course prescribed by the Regents determines the choice of masterpieces for each of the four years. The greatest freedom is to be found in the North Central and Western territory exclusive of California. Schools in this region choose their readings from the lists of the Conference, but they arrange them in amazing variety and they occasionally introduce selections not used elsewhere. In place of intensive study upon Burke, Macaulay, etc., these schools emphasize the history of English and, more rarely, American literature, employing textbooks for the purpose and causing illustrative selections of literature to be read in relation to the study of the various periods. The survey of American literature generally precedes that of English literature and is frequently assigned to the second or third year. California is exceptional because of the influence of the state university. This institution publishes a list of readings which will be accepted in preparation for entrance and in this way shapes the policy of the schools. It is worth mentioning in passing that the university requires but two years of English in the high schools which send students to it, and that, as a result, the third and fourth years of English are generally elective in California.

By putting together the reports from all parts of the country, we find a total of 181 books, collections, or important individual pieces mentioned as being used for class study and recitation. The 35 of these which were most frequently included have been arranged in the table on p. 596, so as to show how many times each selection was named for each high-school year in the reports from each of the five principal sections of the country. A study of the table will reveal that for most of the selections no locus has been agreed upon. If the pieces named for close study by the Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English were excluded, the diversity would appear much greater. Of the selections named but not included in the table few were reported more than five or six times. The next four in order of frequency were *Henry Esmond*, mentioned 26 times, *Lays of Ancient Rome* 26, *Twelfth Night* 25, Burns's *Poems* 21.

No particular basis of choice or arrangement of classics is in most cases apparent. Probably the intention is to put the easier books first, but if so there is great difference of opinion as to which the easier books are. This, of course, depends largely upon the treatment, and hence

we must conclude that the point of view from which *Julius Caesar*, *Treasure Island*, Chaucer's *Prologue*, and many others are approached varies widely. As has been stated above, schools which lay stress upon the history of English literature seem to have arranged the material of the last two years so as to illustrate as far as possible the main periods of development. In one or two cases this purpose has dictated the plan of the entire course. Perhaps the most striking departure from the miscellaneous and chronological arrangements is made by the Horace Mann School, New York. Here the attempt is to bring pieces of a particular type together, a half-semester or half-year being devoted to the drama or to essays and periodicals. The same idea appears in the latest revision of the Chicago course, and in a number of other places.

The composition work described is mainly written, though there is evidently a growing appreciation of the importance of practice in speaking. About 60 per cent of the schools mention oral composition, while a much smaller proportion indicate that they have established definite relations between speaking and writing. The common practice is to require the pupils to prepare talks in the same manner and upon the same kinds of subjects as in the case of written composition. Certain schools, however, select current events or reports on books read as being especially adapted to oral treatment, while in a few instances it is stated that oral compositions are written out after having been given, or the reverse.

On the average, between one and two themes are required each week, but a few schools are content with one a month or even one or two a term. The tendency is toward less frequency and greater length as the final year is approached. The average length of themes in the first year is about 200 words; in the fourth year, 500. In several schools, pupils in the third year or the fourth year or both are required, "for sustained effort," to prepare stories, arguments, or "theses" 2,000 words in length. In the High Schools of Commerce in New York City and Boston, for example, each Senior prepares an illustrated account of some occupation or industry, the material for which he collects from various sources outside the school. At the other extreme are schools which demand themes of but a single paragraph in the fourth year. In a few instances pupils are asked to write daily. This is usually in the first or second year. Theme writing is often displaced in the fourth year by the study of the classics and the history of literature, or, at any rate, writing is at this time based upon the literature read. This is

due, no doubt, to the influence of the examinations given by the College Entrance Board.

About half of the schools set apart more or less time for the study of English grammar with the aid of a book. This is usually assigned to the beginning of the first year or to the end of the fourth, though a considerable minority distribute the work throughout the first and second, or even throughout the first, second, and third years. The practice in the remaining schools is to regard grammar as a part of the course in composition and to treat it incidentally. Nearly all the composition books, however, which are mentioned as being used in the first two years contain chapters on grammar. It is safe to say, therefore, that a review of grammar is commonly given early in the high-school course. The fourth-year course is in preparation for teaching or for an examination. It is worthy of remark that a great variety of grammar texts are named, ranging from Harvey and Reed and Kellogg to the newest publications. There is clearly no consensus as to the kind of grammar that should be taught.

The questions as to how the course had been determined were left unanswered by about a tenth of those who sent replies. As already indicated, the courses in New York follow the Regents' Syllabus, while those in New England and the other Middle states are under the sway of the Uniform Requirements. The schools in the remainder of the country, with the exception of California, almost all declare that the needs of the pupils are first considered, although the Uniform Requirements are mentioned by many and, as explained above, followed by nearly all. In the absence of other standards, the prescriptions of the colleges have been accepted as representing the best that is known concerning education in English for high-school boys and girls. The recent announcement by the Conference that the schools should lay more stress upon oral expression, upon composition based on experience apart from reading, and upon English grammar has not had time to produce full effect, though these activities seem to be rapidly growing in favor.

Turning to the answers which were made to the twenty-four supplementary questions, we find, first of all, striking confirmation of the Hopkins Report on the Cost and Labor of English Teaching. The average number of pupils to the teacher seems to be above one hundred and twenty-five. Three writers out of four say that the chief obstacle to complete success is the overplus of classes and of pupils, which precludes time for conference and for proper attention to written work.

Among the other complaints are that teachers are poorly or unevenly prepared, that other departments do not co-operate, that the pupils have too many studies and too many social distractions, lack earnestness, suffer from poor environment, and have not been well trained in the lower grades, that the prescriptions of the colleges hinder the adaptation of the material to the pupils, and that the schools lack library and other equipment. The tests of efficiency which are generally recognized are the college entrance examinations, the college courses, and the examinations set by the schools themselves. A number of answers make mention of the power of clear and effective expression, interest in the work, the power to appreciate literature, etc., but no measure of these abilities is suggested. Other tests brought forward are success in business, opinions of graduates, voluntary reading, the English used in other classes, etc. On the whole there seem to be no tests generally regarded as satisfactory.

As for the unity of the course, two-thirds of the writers regard the course as a single undivided whole, and a slightly smaller percentage assign a single credit to each term's work. To state the matter from the other angle, about a third of the schools make some separation of courses and credits. This generally consists in recognizing either oral expression, grammar, or history of literature as distinctive units or factors, though a few schools are committed to the policy of separating literary study from the study of rhetoric and prose composition. When distinctive courses in the history of literature, oral expression, or prose composition are given, they are frequently elective.

The answers to the inquiry as to the relations existing between the work in composition and that in literature reveal a wide variation. A majority depend upon the literature read in some way to illustrate or enforce the principles of composition which they are striving to inculcate. Almost an equal number base the composition exercises upon the subject-matter of the literature. These include outlines, "imitations," biographies, reports, reviews, summaries, reproductions, and discussions. On the other hand, approximately one-fourth of those answering say that they draw very little or not at all upon literature for the subject-matter of composition, especially in the earlier years. About half of the writers think that attention is equally divided in their classes between literature on the one hand and the pupils' own knowledge and experience on the other. The movement at present is away from literary subjects for themes, toward subjects drawn from the experience of the pupils.

Sixty per cent of the schools make definite provision for instruction

in public speaking, oral reading, pronunciation or other form of oral English. In one-fourth of the schools so reporting, this includes the provision of a special teacher or department, but the courses offered are frequently elective. The most common practice is to set apart one hour a week for two or more years for special drill and training in speaking and in reading aloud. In some sections, notably the South, great value is attached to public debates and oratorical or declamatory contests. Classroom debates are also favored, as well as dramatics, with or without costume and scenery. Many schools have one or more literary or debating clubs under faculty supervision, participation in which is in some cases required and occasionally even credited toward graduation. About half of the schools, however, which report special attention to oral English, depend upon the regular teachers to care for it. This is done by reserving a few minutes at the beginning of each recitation for speeches, reading, or drill; by devoting an hour a week or a few weeks of a term to these activities; or simply by laying proper emphasis upon the oral side of the English work in all classes. This may involve a definite scheme of co-operation of all departments, to which reference will be made below.

Student criticism is for the most part confined to general class discussion after a theme has been read. This is by no means a uniform practice. It is doubtful whether all teachers direct their pupils in the proofreading of their own papers. As explained above, this is the more necessary inasmuch as the teacher is usually overburdened and cannot give the students' papers the degree of attention they need.

Regular conference hours are provided for in only 25 per cent of the schools. A large number, however, speak of their absence with regret. It is evident that teachers of English regard personal interviews with students in composition as essential and would arrange for them if the school authorities could be induced to provide a sufficient number of teachers to make it possible. There is encouragement in the fact that very recently certain cities have cut down the number of pupils to the teacher and at the same time have scheduled regular hours for conference.

Such conditions would rapidly become more general if the conception of English composition as a laboratory subject were more widely disseminated. It is significant that very few schools report any specific plan of conducting recitations in composition. One of the most practical is that in use in the Manual Training High School in Indianapolis. Here the pupils on certain days prepare written work under the super-

vision of the teacher. Themes are preserved from term to term and worked over, and the general effect is that of a laboratory rather than that of a lecture room.

About 50 per cent of the schools reporting have a school paper or an annual or both, while many others maintain a column in the local paper. Several report that their papers have been discontinued because of the difficulty of financial support, which, in the smaller places, must be drawn largely from advertising. The usual plan is to place the school periodical in the hands of student officers chosen by competition, who work under the direction and advice of members of the faculty. The prevailing type is in the nature of an illustrated monthly magazine, though weeklies and dailies are also to be found. The replies do not indicate what value is attached to these publications, though an examination of them reveals the fact that they are capable of being made of real worth to students of English. Too frequently they are mere "joke books." Specimen copies of the following were received: *The School Herald*, San Jose High School, San Jose, Cal.; *The Assembler*, Wrentham High School, Wrentham, Mass.; *The Booster*, Manual Training High School, Indianapolis, Ind.; *The Caliper*, Stuyvesant High School, New York, N.Y.; *The Cardinal*, Lincoln High School, Portland, Ore.; *The Central High School Monthly*, Central High School, Cleveland, Ohio; *The Comment*, Keokuk High School, Keokuk, Iowa; *The Crimson*, Manual Training High School, Louisville, Ky.; *The Distaff*, Girls' High School, Boston, Mass.; *The Dome*, Richmond Hill High School, Richmond Hill, N.Y.; *Ell Ess Pe*, La Salle-Peru Township High School, La Salle and Peru, Ill.; *The Helios*, Central High School, Grand Rapids, Mich.; *The Kodak*, Everett High School, Everett, Wash.; *The Mirror*, Manual Training High School, Indianapolis, Ind.; *The Occident*, West High School, Rochester, N.Y.; *The Oracle*, Mount Vernon High School, Mount Vernon, N.Y.; *The Parrot*, New Rochelle High School, New Rochelle, N.Y.; *The Polaris*, Freeport High School, Freeport, Ill.; *High School Record*, Girls' High School, Louisville, Ky.; *The Recorder*, High Schools of Springfield, Springfield, Mass.; *Red and White*, Battin High School, Elizabeth, N.J.; *The Russ*, High School, San Diego, Cal.; *The Scarab*, Technical High School, Cleveland, Ohio; *The Spectator*, West High School, Waterloo, Iowa; *The Student*, Oklahoma High School, Oklahoma City, Okla.; *The Tattler*, Ithaca High School, Ithaca, N.Y.; *The Tooter*, South Omaha High School, South Omaha, Neb.; *The Triangle*, Brooklyn Heights Seminary, Brooklyn, N.Y.; *The Tyro*, High School, San Bernardino, Cal.; *High School Voice*, High School,

Owensboro, Ky.; *Yeatman Life*, Yeatman High School, St. Louis, Mo.; *The June Bug*, Technical High School, Cleveland, Ohio.

The grammar that is taught in the high schools is generally described as "a thorough review." It seems to be assumed that the pupils have received instruction in the subject in the elementary school but that further teaching is necessary in order to insure correctness in oral and written composition. Hence it is frequently stated that the topics considered are sentence structure and those inflectional forms in which error is common. Where this point of view obtains, a close connection is established between grammar and composition: examples for the study of grammar are selected from the themes of the pupils, while, on the other hand, the principles taught in grammar are constantly applied to these themes and the pupils are taught to correct their own errors. This practice is not universal; at least a fourth of the schools teach grammar as an isolated discipline, even in the first year. The work of the fourth year, as explained above, is in preparation for an examination set by higher educational authorities. One school reports a special grammar class after school for those showing weakness.

About 60 per cent of the schools give special attention to spelling; the remainder either fail to answer question 15 or say that pupils are required to be careful of their spelling when writing themes. The most common practices are to give a series of drill lessons from a spelling-book or other selected list in the first year, to give short drill exercises weekly throughout the course, or to drill from time to time as the need is. One school devotes ten minutes each day for four years. Another teaches fourteen rules in the first term. Still others report occasional contests, "Blunder Books," a dictionary prize at graduation to the best speller, "co-operation of all teachers," "special classes for the weaker brethren," "five words a day," "special drills in commercial classes," "a spelling list compiled by the school," etc. The subject is evidently a live one, for several writers speak with fervor of the fact that a *sensible* spelling-book is used, that pupils are marked down severely for errors, that "no pupil is permitted [*sic*] to pass from the first year to the second until he can spell," or that spelling is *taught*, not merely tested. Others say simply that all teachers are required to set up a high ideal of accuracy and to be instant in season and out.

Other mechanical matters receive, on the whole, less attention, though the attitude toward them corresponds to that just explained as manifested in the case of spelling. A few schools have form sheets, or guides to the preparation of manuscript, and they report practice in

proofreading. One or two teach standard business forms in all fourth-year classes.

Mythology is regarded by some as the peculiar province of the history teacher. When it is taught in the English classes, the work takes one of three forms. Either a series of lessons is given with the aid of a text-book like Gayley—this is the rule in California—or certain classics, particularly the *Odyssey*, are read and the myth stories learned in an appropriate context, or the myths are made the subjects of oral and written compositions as the allusions in the reading require. Of course many teachers merely cause their pupils to memorize such brief explanations of mythical allusions as are to be found in the notes appended by the editor of the annotated classic in hand. This can hardly be called “teaching” the myths.

Much has been said of late concerning the use of modern books and periodicals in the classroom, hence the answers to question 20 are of special interest. Some of the writers took the question to mean voluntary reading, or outside reading in general, and did not distinguish between classics and moderns, but it is clear that the country as a whole has accepted the responsibility of guiding the general reading of high-school pupils. Of the different sections, the South is most backward or conservative in this respect.

References to magazines appear in the reports far less often than references to books, and a few writers declare that time spent on periodicals is mostly wasted. On the other hand, a number of schools conduct regular courses for a semester more or less in current literature. The common practice is to send the pupils to the magazines for material to be presented in oral composition exercises. It is not certain, however, that proper guidance and criticism always accompany, or that a knowledge of standards results. Extensive provision in the school library is sometimes made for this work; one school reports fifteen and another thirty as the number of periodicals subscribed for.

Guidance in choice of recent books seems to be largely incidental to the class discussion of literary masterpieces, and is declared by some not worth while. It is, however, a common practice to provide printed or other lists of books for general reading, and these include late books. A certain amount of such reading—from two to eight books a year—is required by many schools. At stated times the pupils report on the books they have read and compare their impressions of various authors. Formal written reviews are apparently not popular.

Among the plans in use is that of organizing the members of a class

into a sort of newspaper staff. The editors give out assignments and gather the contributions into a sort of "Review of Reviews."

Work in modern authors requires, of course, ample library facilities. It appears that this need is rapidly being met. Over thirty schools have libraries of from three to eight thousand volumes, with trained librarians in charge, and many others manage through the aid of regular teachers and student assistants to conduct the work. Co-operation with the public library is emphasized in many reports. A large number have this, while others regret the lack of it. Here and there pupils are being trained to use card catalogues and other library devices, both as readers themselves and as guides to others. In a few instances library training is credited in the school course.

Another of the newer features of the English work is dramatics. This generally takes the form either of the class play or the performances of a club or society. Yet some schools recognize the possibility of acting out scenes or simple plays in the classroom, and give the pupils opportunity so to treat standard works or to prepare versions for themselves. When nothing more is attempted, the pupils are encouraged to read the dialogue in character. A few schools maintain special departments of oral expression, to which dramatic work is left. The purpose of the school play is sometimes stated to be the very tangible one of raising money for the library or some other object.

Literary and other clubs, usually under faculty supervision, are now common. Various limitations are imposed, such as a number of members that must not be exceeded, competitive systems of admission, school standing, senior or other class membership, etc. A few schools report general activities in the nature of mock trials, school senates, and the like. The justification of clubs is said to be the development of the spirit of team play, training in social life, supplementing of regular English and other lessons, and similar purposes.

The problem of co-operation of all departments in the teaching of English has not been widely dealt with. The question as to how it is secured was left unanswered by one-third of the schools reporting, while about fifty others say pointedly that they have not or cannot secure satisfactory co-operation. The means usually employed is the regular teachers' meeting and in some cases special conferences. A few principals give specific directions, which must be followed. Nine writers say that the names of those deficient in English are reported by all teachers and special work in English is provided for them. Five state that all teachers are required to deduct from the marks on written work for mistakes in

grammar and spelling, while a like number report the giving of credit for papers prepared for other departments. Twenty-six schools have established the custom of holding pupils for accuracy, clearness, and correctness in all classes. Nineteen declare they have no difficulty in the matter because of the willingness of the teachers and the excellent spirit and traditions of the school. Among the scattering suggestions and reports are the following: subject-matter of composition drawn from or supplied by other subject of study; correlation with history, the languages, and science especially profitable; English teachers visit other classes and confer with other teachers; the task of securing good technique is shared by the teachers of ancient and modern languages; a standing committee on co-operation is maintained; spelling lists, lists of errors, and lists of reading are made out by all teachers; errors are summarized by other departments; class advisers are required to assist; other teachers are deficient in English and are unable to co-operate; the school course is laid out with a view to correlation; there is but one teacher. On the whole, there is evident a strong feeling of the necessity of co-operation and a determination to secure it.

Local conditions—conditions of pupils, that is—do not determine the English course in a large fraction of the schools. Many writers understand “local conditions” to mean proximity to a particular college, the existence of a state or other education board, or the Uniform Requirements, and in such cases, of which there were many, an attitude of protest was frequently assumed. More than a third of the reports, however, contain no answer to the question. It is safe to say that few courses of study are written with special reference to particular communities. Even when the school feels free, the tendency is to follow the example of others or the suggestions of the college catalogues, which must necessarily be general. The miscellaneous items gleaned from the papers include the following: the literature of the section is emphasized; the *Oregon Trail* and other stories of pioneer days are taught, in order to help the pupils to realize the history of their state; much drill in oral expression is demanded by the foreign population; separate courses are provided for different classes of pupils; industrial or agricultural subjects are chosen for themes; few go to college, and hence all is done that is possible to secure good expression and wide reading; social demands hinder the work of the pupils; special courses are provided for those obliged to leave school at the close of the second year; free textbooks furnished on contract hinder choice of reading; the pupils are theater-goers and hence the play is a good point of departure; lack of library and other equipment

hampers the work. The publication of a number of courses which have been evolved out of particular sets of conditions is desirable and would be welcomed. The bibliography below contains a few references that are of value in this connection.

SUGGESTIONS AS TO IMPROVEMENT

The invitation to add suggestions for the improvement of the English course in the schools was accepted by three score of the correspondents. These have been roughly grouped as applying to the course itself and the administration of it, the relation of the school to the college, the composition work, the literature studies and home reading, the teachers themselves, and miscellaneous.

"The important thing about our work is the fact that it is planned from kindergarten through the High School. The whole course is under the supervision of the head of the English department. This seems to me absolutely essential to the best sort of work."

"Make the public realize the problem and make them assist rather than find fault. Teachers must vitalize the English work. Of course, smaller classes and more time are necessary."

"The English course should have four periods per week for every term. The lists of books should be so large and so comprehensive that choice can be made to meet local conditions. Oral expression should be emphasized more than at present."

"I believe that a knowledge of the history of literature is much more important than the sort of work required nowadays. We are tied up to state requirements. As it is we cannot fill in because of lack of time."

"We are hoping for such changes in requirements and credit as will make oral English work possible in the small high schools of this state."

"Is not the changing of teachers every two years bad for the schools?"

"(1) Education of teachers: most of them have to be taught *how* and *what* to teach. (2) A thorough knowledge of the *principles* of grammar is absolutely necessary and has been too much neglected. (3) A love of reading, not necessarily of standard books, should be striven for."

"We are very much interested in the proportion of time to be allowed for the study of Shakespeare's plays."

"Please take up the general subject of standardization of English virtues and faults. When is it reasonable that certain errors should be eliminated before promotion is made to the next grade?"

"A determined effort should be made to have small classes in English. More time should be given to theme writing."

"The School administration would like absolute freedom in determining the course in English. All pupils should be required to give the time actually

allotted to English, and higher schools should accept such pupils on certificate, after inquiring about the grade of the secondary school."

"One of the main causes of difficulty is the fact that the pupils are passed from the grammar schools to the high school on a general average, so that a pupil may reach the high school who has never passed a term of English. The high school requires a passing average in every subject."

"I hope the Committee will do all it can to emphasize the importance of an early, thorough drill in the very fundamentals. The discipline of thoroughness should not be sacrificed to "culture." Make English as practical as possible."

"We have here a strong commercial course and a good manual training course. The commercial students in the final term have business composition instead of regular composition work. They take literature with academic students. We require only five terms of English in the manual course."

"Business and industrial demands are insistent. So are the influences of local schools, normal schools, and university."

"Pressure should be brought to bear upon principals and superintendents to bring it about that classes in English shall be smaller and that more English teachers shall be provided. Every department in the high school receives more aid and attention than the English department, due to ignorance I believe."

"The course would provide for more composition work if the time of the teachers permitted."

"I cannot fill out the inclosed blanks for the English course, as we have no hard-and-fast rule as to the number of days each week to be given to each branch of the work. The arrangement depends on the individual teacher, who tries to adapt her work to immediate conditions and needs."

"Make less of required work and allow a greater freedom of choice to meet local situations."

"The range of reading in College Entrance Requirements should be much broader, including many more books than it does at present."

"(1) We should like to have a systematic study of grammar during the last year. (2) We should like to have professional instruction in oral expression throughout the four years. (3) We need more opportunity for personal conference work with students."

"English classes should be smaller. English teachers should have competent assistants for the correction of themes."

"The course should be modernized and time given to current literature. The course should be made more practical and less theoretical."

"Most courses of study require big doses of grammar, rhetoric, and the history of English literature uncorrelated, so that the pupil looks upon each study as an end in itself and swallows each wholesale. Most courses also require a little of each kind of composition every term, so that in no term does the pupil get anything but a confused idea of the several kinds. Our course is planned otherwise."

"English in the grammar grades ought to be supervised as music and manual training are."

"The Fourth year work is too difficult. Let us have a freer hand in teaching argument."

"I believe in teaching literature for power instead of mere knowledge; in more certification for college entrance; in more required participation in associations of English teachers."

"Where college requirements do not predetermine, we do something entirely different—a great deal of reading and little intensive work. 'College preparatory English' is a course in writing. I believe a course in reading is more fundamental to mind, to character, to life. Therefore, I stress it more. I think its effects will last longer. Whether they can be tested accurately or surely I do not know. Information can be tested by examination; so can skill in analysis of structure. But can a heightened interest in books and life? I hope to work out some exercises to show growth in discrimination and sensitiveness to form."

"Secure a good certificate plan for college entrance, make clear just what efficiency means, and outline in what way schools can attain it. The rest will be easy."

"In my experience the great dislike for English is due to too much stress on classics that have hardly any appeal to high-school students. Instead of Burke I would read present living orators, etc. We spend too much time on Milton's shorter poems. We are teaching English as a dead language."

"In Freshman and Sophomore years, we encourage the writing of reports concerning lectures, fires, ball games, railroad accidents, and railroad and mining devices."

"To my mind the need is for shorter themes daily. The major part of the work should be oral instead of written (though none the less thoroughly worked out). More thoughtful reading instead of too detailed study would lead to better results."

"We are interested in the possibility of laboratory work in English. We desire four years of required English and better co-operation of departments, especially in the equal sharing of certain burdens that belong to us all, that we may have time for the history of literature and the clearer development of framework in composition as well."

"Theme work consists in part of reports required in other departments."

"English work should emphasize more magazine reading and current life about us. We do this as much as we can through compositions and oral reports. But I am often confronted with the pupils' ignorance of the great authors and events of the day. This is so partly because teachers think current literature not proper for children but chiefly because there is lack of time."

"For instance, when a birthday celebration like Riley's just past or the

papers and magazines or a lecture from the school platform calls attention to an author or a book, the teacher emphasizes the value of that author or book. Sometimes prize money earned by a study room is applied to the purchase of suitable modern books to be read in that room."

"The school library is supported partly by student contributions, and is managed by the English department. Students get some English credit for library work. We have a filing case for all themes, where they are kept till a student graduates. Then he can have them all if he wishes."

"By a system of library lessons at the beginning of the year, we try to acquaint the girls with the card catalogue and the method of classification and arrangement. Each girl is given a number of slips that require search in different parts of the library and also send her to the catalogue for bibliographies."

"Each year at least three books of Home Reading are required: (1) Church's *Iliad*, *Lady of the Lake*, *Tom Brown at Rugby*. (2) *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Tale of Two Cities*, *Talisman* or *Woodstock*. (3) Goldsmith (Irving), *House of the Seven Gables*, *Twice-Told Tales*. (4) Chaucer's *Prologue*, *David Copperfield*, *Henry Esmond*, *Sesame and Lilies*."

"It would aid us if we had an approved list of modern novels that would be helpful and at the same time interesting. Few of us have time to draw up a list especially suited to the needs of young persons."

"Editions of modern authors suitable for school use are needed."

"The commercial course does not allow pupils to study English literature as a subject, although it is desired by parents and pupils. I feel that the idea prevalent, that a business man does not need literature other than business literature, is a great mistake."

"Only about one-third of our people go to college. So we require wide reading in order to introduce the pupils to as many authors as possible."

"Less analytical work should be required. Some classics are unsatisfactory for mixed classes. Texts in classics should have notes and references at foot of page. Notes should answer, not ask, questions."

"In order to give a broader and more interesting course, when texts are not available for school use, we have bought sets of thirty books for class use—*Ben Hur*, *Jordan's Essays*, etc. We subscribe for thirty periodicals."

"I found by private inquiry that few of my students had ever read any really great books. I have tried to remedy that by assigning a certain amount of collateral reading, selecting works that would fit in with the literature studied that term but trying to get books which I thought would interest the students as well as be good for them. Occasionally I have added to my list novels by modern authors, but I have tried always to select those of the better class."

"To me the main problem seems to be to find a method for increasing library facilities and the amount of outside reading."

"The first-year girls are taught how to use the library card index. We require supplementary reading of all. Each must read a certain number of

essays, poems, and novels. The reading is entered on a card according to a varying formula. The cards are filled out by the teacher. Reports, too, are given on magazine stories and articles found in current magazines."

"Insist that colleges shall require their graduates to have a fair command of speech, so that teachers of all branches may exemplify good usage in their own classes. No other kind of co-operation from other departments avails anything."

"The portion of women to men who teach English is too great. There is an atmosphere of repellent sentimentality in many English classrooms. The average English course is intended apparently for budding Henry van Dykes and not for the somewhat more usual Tom Sawyers and Huckleberry Finns."

"Robert's *Rules of Order* is taught throughout the course. One national hymn a semester must be committed to memory."

"Students are advised to adopt the revised spellings of the Simplified Spelling Board. Surely this ought to be done in all schools."

"I try to make the pupils feel that the class work is theirs not mine, and to inspire enthusiasm and personal initiative."

"The nomenclature of grammar should be uniform."

"Would it not be possible to introduce the study of Bible stories? The ignorance of the students is profound."

"We have an English twenty, chosen from the entire school in May of each year according to excellence in English (recitation, theme, debating, etc.). These twenty compete for prizes. This stimulates to all-round work in English."

TYPES OF ORGANIZATION

The reader may judge from the answers which have been summarized as to whether there are at present distinct types of organization of high-school English in this country. As a recent writer has declared, there is remarkable uniformity in the American secondary school. This is due, without doubt, to the fact that the secondary school has been in reality a preparatory school rather than a school for the continuation of a common-school education. Except as agricultural or industrial or mercantile interests have here and there made themselves felt, the aim has been general culture by means of the several disciplines long identified with a college education so far as these could be introduced into an institution for boys and girls from fourteen to eighteen years of age. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the differences between the schools of the East and West on the one hand and the North Central states on the other. The latter profess to a greater freedom and doubtless enjoy a high degree of it. Yet the kind of work done in the schools of these various sections does not present wide variation. The main difference seems to be that

the schools which are near the examining colleges devote the fourth year to minute study of Burke, Milton, *et al.*, and to a review of the books read in previous years, while elsewhere the reading of that year is more generally chosen to illustrate the progress of English literature. Two states deserve special mention. The course prescribed by the Regents, including grammar in the fourth year, is closely followed in New York, while, as has been indicated above, the schools of California accept the suggestions of the state university, both as to the content of the course in English and the length of it.

Perhaps the most striking of the recent experiments in organization is that of differentiating clearly between the more utilitarian and the more purely aesthetic aspects of English study. This involves the practice of oral and written exposition, discussion, historical narrative, and the like, with the reading of books of similar nature, on the one hand, and the reading of poetry, drama, fiction, and essay, with the necessary accompanying exercises in oral and written reports, descriptions, stories, dramatizations, verses, and the like, on the other. Whether this discrimination is accomplished by setting apart certain days in the week, certain weeks in the term, certain terms in the course, or even certain teachers for each of the two aspects defined does not so much matter. The principle is fundamental and seems to be gaining supporters.

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HIGH-SCHOOL READINGS BY GRADES AND BY SECTIONS OF THE COUNTRY.*

| CLASSICS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY | NEW ENGLAND | | | | | MIDDLE STATES | | | | | NORTH CENTRAL STATES | | | | | THE SOUTH | | | | | THE WEST | | | | | TOTAL OF ALL SEC-TIONS |
|--|-------------|----|-----|----|-------|---------------|----|-----|----|-------|----------------------|----|-----|----|-------|-----------|----|-----|----|-------|----------|----|-----|----|-------|------------------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | I | II | III | IV | Total | I | II | III | IV | Total | I | II | III | IV | Total | I | II | III | IV | Total | I | II | III | IV | Total | |
| <i>Macbeth</i> | 0 | 0 | 3 | 14 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 35 | 38 | 0 | 4 | 26 | 20 | 50 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 11 | 18 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 16 | 20 |
| <i>St. Paul's Epistles</i> | 4 | 7 | 2 | 15 | 3 | 28 | 3 | 0 | 34 | 11 | 31 | 11 | 4 | 57 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 18 | 143 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 10 | |
| <i>Julius Cæsar</i> | 3 | 5 | 18 | 3 | 24 | 3 | 7 | 22 | 3 | 32 | 10 | 30 | 10 | 2 | 52 | 2 | 15 | 5 | 1 | 23 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 22 | |
| <i>Idylls of the King</i> | 0 | 0 | 16 | 3 | 19 | 2 | 5 | 17 | 0 | 24 | 18 | 15 | 9 | 5 | 47 | 12 | 2 | 12 | 2 | 33 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 18 | |
| <i>Franklin's Autobiography</i> | 7 | 6 | 9 | 0 | 22 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 38 | 19 | 17 | 3 | 1 | 39 | 20 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 23 | |
| <i>Merchant of Venice</i> | 3 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 17 | 5 | 23 | 9 | 0 | 38 | 19 | 17 | 3 | 1 | 39 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 17 | 25 | |
| <i>Milton's Minor Poems</i> | 0 | 0 | 7 | 16 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 27 | 2 | 14 | 21 | 3 | 42 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 14 | 28 | |
| <i>Burke's Conciliation</i> | 0 | 0 | 12 | 13 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 20 | 3 | 19 | 2 | 0 | 21 | 0 | 12 | 19 | 0 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 23 | |
| <i>Ancient Mariner</i> | 4 | 7 | 1 | 15 | 27 | 4 | 1 | 27 | 0 | 32 | 8 | 22 | 11 | 4 | 35 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 48 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 28 | |
| <i>De Cæsar's Papers</i> | 0 | 13 | 5 | 0 | 18 | 1 | 6 | 20 | 1 | 27 | 17 | 10 | 1 | 3 | 31 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 55 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 28 | |
| <i>Palgrave et al.</i> | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 24 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 27 | 17 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 37 | 0 | 17 | 5 | 0 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 17 | |
| <i>Vision of Sir Launfal</i> | 0 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 12 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 10 | 0 | 16 | 10 | 2 | 28 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 25 | 42 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 12 | |
| <i>Tale of Two Cities</i> | 0 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 7 | 12 | 1 | 0 | 23 | 4 | 16 | 2 | 34 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 88 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 11 | |
| <i>Sketchbook</i> | 10 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 25 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 33 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 90 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 18 | |
| <i>Lady of the Lake</i> | 0 | 0 | 1 | 14 | 15 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 24 | 28 | 0 | 4 | 14 | 3 | 21 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 78 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 12 | |
| <i>Macaulay's Johnson</i> | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 1 | 12 | 10 | 5 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 40 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | |
| <i>Washington and Webster</i> | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 12 | 3 | 1 | 16 | 17 | 5 | 13 | 11 | 3 | 32 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 9 | 73 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 20 | |
| <i>As You Like It</i> | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 9 | 14 | 23 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 50 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 9 | |
| <i>Carlyle's Burns</i> | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 13 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 15 | |
| <i>Deserted Village</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 3 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 17 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 57 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 10 | |
| <i>Chaucer</i> | 4 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 14 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 15 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 53 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 31 | |
| <i>The Odyssey</i> | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 18 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 47 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | |
| <i>Treasure Island</i> | 3 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 18 | 6 | 10 | 3 | 20 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | |
| <i>House of Seven Gables</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 10 | 6 | 14 | 20 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 10 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | |
| <i>Hamlet</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 12 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | |
| <i>Lincoln's Speeches</i> | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 13 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | |
| <i>Midsummer-Night's Dream</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | |
| <i>Vicar of Wakefield</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | |
| <i>Emerson's Essays</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | |
| <i>Twice-Told Tales</i> | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | |
| <i>The Iliad</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 18 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | |
| <i>Poe's Tales</i> | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 18 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | |
| <i>Franklin's Autobiog-raphy</i> | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 13 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | |
| <i>Sohrab and Rustum</i> | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | |
| <i>Sesame and Lillies</i> | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 13 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | |

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